

TOMAS LEHMANN: *Paulinus Nolanus und die Basilica Nova in Cimitile/Nola. Studien zu einem zentralen Denkmal der spätantik-frühchristlichen Architektur. Spätantike – Frühes Christentum – Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend. Reihe B: Studien und Perspektiven, Band 19. Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 2004. ISBN 3-89500-133-3. 283 pp., 195 fig. EUR 169.*

Cimitile is a late antique pilgrimage sanctuary centered on the tomb of St. Felix in the modern town of Nola in Campania, northeast of Mount Vesuvius. It is perhaps not the most well-known site of its kind, but despite this it has been the target of much research from the 16th century onwards. One of the most recent works is Tomas Lehmann's study, which is based on his dissertation work. His aim is to create a three dimensional reconstruction of one of the buildings in the complex, the Basilica Nova, built in the 5th century AD by the bishop Paulinus Nolanus, who also described the building in some of his writings. As his source material, Lehmann uses the old archaeological data of excavation and buildings, new documentation made by himself as well as Paulinus' texts. The phase to be reconstructed is that which perhaps could be considered the original or the way the Basilica Nova appeared at the time of Paulinus.

It is clear that the research has been conducted with diligence and the end result is, at first glance, quite handsome in large format and with lavish illustrations. The contents are arranged fairly conservatively: the brief introduction is followed by a short research history, a chronological description of buildings at the site before the basilica was built and then a long description of the basilica itself. This description is followed by a short chapter on other, later buildings. Over a third of the pages (excluding the plates) is dedicated to Paulinus' texts, their translations and commentaries. The two last chapters deal with the reconstruction and the appearance of the Basilica Nova.

Lehmann's book represents a type of publication which is quite common in classical archaeology. He has a research question which he sets out to study based on all available sources and he also produces some primary data himself. The end result is a mixture presentation of primary data, i.e., a sort of fieldwork report, and applied research with interpretation of the data. What Lehmann also has in common with many others is the fact that he has to base large parts of his research on data collected with methods and documentation much less than perfect. What I always find curious in these publications is that so many of them complain about the poor documentation of the earlier research, but they do virtually nothing to improve the situation. I certainly hope that the survey campaign conducted by Lehmann himself is reported and archived somewhere in its totality with principles, methods, and primary data carefully explained and that this report will be available to other scholars working on the Cimitile complex. This publication says almost nothing about how Lehmann's own analysis of the buildings was conducted or how his measurements were made, which makes it hard to evaluate his final results.

The descriptions of the archaeological entities are very much based on texts despite the fact that there are also plenty of illustrations. Unfortunately, in many cases, the texts and the images do not work very well together. Some very basic plans are missing such as a clear plan of all the remains identified – the fold-out plan 2 (*Falttafel 2*) comes close, but many of the legend numbers and letter codes are not indicated on the

plan. The varying levels of the structures are described in the text by using positive and negative heights compared to a reference zero point established by the Italian archaeologist Chierici and used (probably) also by Lehmann (this has to be assumed from the text). A simple plan with the heights indicated would have given much needed visual support to the text. Another useful plan might have been one indicating the various building techniques used in all the early structures. Additionally, one phase plan presenting all the pre-Paulinus structures but only them, might have been as useful as the phase-by-phase plans presented now (e.g., *Abb.* 24–26).

The chapters concerning the earlier and other buildings apart from the Basilica Nova are very brief and, considering the aims proposed for the work, this is understandable. What is in a way unfortunate is that Lehmann also wishes to present new data from his research in connection with these parts of the complex. There is not much space to develop the arguments and the difference between new and old data is sometimes hard to see and to appreciate in the short descriptions.

The Basilica Nova itself is then presented in much detail, but again some rather basic illustrations are missing. The structures are presented in ground plan as well as some elevations and photographs. The three elevations present only interpretative information, i.e., the wall surfaces are divided into chronological phases, and no primary documentation is given. For other researchers working on the complex, such basic data would probably be very valuable. Presenting the observations of such a complicated building in an even more detailed manner would have been necessary to be able to evaluate the results. The rather recent developments in the stratigraphic analysis of buildings and the application of these principles could have benefited Lehmann's work (i.e., Roberto Parenti's articles in *Archeologia e restauro dei monumenti. I ciclo di lezioni sulla ricerca applicata in archeologia, Certosa di Pontignano (Siena), 28 settembre – 10 ottobre 1987. A cura di Riccardo Francovich & Roberto Parenti. 1988.*). The reconstruction of the Basilica Nova in its Pauline appearance is probably as accurate as it can be under the circumstances and the basis of its creation is relatively well described.

My own, relatively meager, philological training does not allow me to evaluate Lehmann's translations of Paulinus' texts which, as mentioned above, form a considerable part of the publication. The inclusion of the original texts in Latin might have been useful for anyone reading the commentaries and translations in detail.

Archaeologists and other scholars wishing to use the results of archaeological research often complain about the brevity and difficulty of language of the reports. I feel that archaeologists often forget that they are writing even their simplest reports for others, who are probably not as familiar with the data used and methods applied as the researcher him/herself is. What is obvious to the person deep in the process of producing and dealing with the material, cannot be regarded as obvious even to those who are researching the same kinds of materials. Lehmann presents plenty of interesting material, but a lot of effort is required of the reader in order to glean the basic information and to understand on what the interpretations are based.

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